

Message Text

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PAGE 01 WARSAW 02182 081809Z

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SUBJECT: PROPOSED PENN STATE IOGA TRADE MISSION

REF: STATE 076269

1. ALTHOUGH IOGA TRADE MISSIONS HAVE EXPERIENCED LIMITED SUCCESS IN POLAND, THEY ARE NOT REGARDED BY THE POLES AS SERIOUS TRADE-PROMOTION EFFORTS. MISSION MEMBERS ARRIVED HERE WITH LITTLE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE POLISH MARKET MUST BE APPROACHED SOMEWHAT DIFFERENTLY THAN WESTERN, OR, IN SOME CASES, OTHER EASTERN EUROPEAN MARKETS. IN THE ABSENCE OF A PRODUCT THEME THAT FALLS WITHIN THE AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY OF ONE OR AT MOST, TWO MINISTRIES, IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ARRANGE POLISH SPONSORSHIP, AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT IN THE SUCCESS OF ANY TRADE MISSION IN THIS HIGHLY COMPETITIVE MARKET.

2. WE HAVE LONG SUPPORTED TECHNICAL SEMINARS AS THE MOST EFFECTIVE TRADE-PROMOTION VEHICLES FOR POLAND. PARTICULARLY AT THE PRESENT TIME, WHEN VERY LIMITED AMOUNTS OF HARD CURRENCY ARE AVAILABLE TO POLISH PURCHASERS, THERE IS LITTLE LIKELIHOOD THAT

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PAGE 02 WARSAW 02182 081809Z

A TRADITIONAL TRADE MISSION WOULD PRODUCE NEW BUSI-

NESS. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT A CAREFULLY PREPARED TECHNICAL SEMINAR, FEATURING PRODUCTS AND PROCESSES IDENTIFIED BY POLISH INDUSTRY AND THE EMBASSY AS HIGH-PRIORITY INVESTMENT INTERESTS, IS THE BEST INSTRUMENT FOR INCREASING U.S. SALES TO POLAND. MANY U.S. FIRMS HAVE BEEN USING THIS TECHNIQUE SUCCESSFULLY FOR MORE THAN A YEAR, DRAWING HEAVILY ON THE SUPPORT OF THE TDC TO STAGE ONE-FIRM TECHNICAL SEMINARS.

3. IN OUR VIEW, CONVENTIONAL TRADE MISSIONS, WHETHER ORGANIZED BY USDOC OR AS IOGA'S, NO LONGER OFFER THE MAIN ADVANTAGE THEY ONCE PROVIDED U.S. FIRMS: ACCESS TO HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS AND DECISION-MAKERS. DURING 1972 AND 1973, THE PRESENCE OF A GROUP OF REPRESENTATIVES OF U.S. FIRMS IN POLAND WAS SUFFICIENTLY NOVEL, AND THE INTEREST OF THE POLES IN ATTRACTING MORE U.S. COMPANIES TO THIS MARKET SUFFICIENTLY HIGH, THAT MOST TRADE MISSIONS WERE GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH SENIOR HIGH-LEVEL OFFICIALS. IF THE FIRMS HAD COME TO POLAND ON THEIR OWN, SUCH MEETINGS WOULD NOT NORMALLY HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE, EVEN WITH OUR SUPPORT. WITH THE PASAGE OF TIME, HOWEVER, AND THE ENORMOUS GROWTH OF POLISH TRADE WITH THE WEST, THE PRESENCE OF U.S. FIRMS HERE HAS CEASED TO BE A NOVELTY, AND THE POLES, UNDERSTANDABLY, DO NOT AUTOMATICALLY ACCORD OUR TRADE MISSIONS THE KIND OF HIGH-LEVEL ATTENTION THEY ONCE RECEIVED. 8IT SHOULD ALSO BE NOTED THAT THIS TYPE OF CONTACT IS NO LONGER SO IMPORTANT AN AVENUE AS IT WAS TO MEETINGS WITH END-USERS. AS BUSINESS PRACTICES IN POLAND HAVE EVOLVED, AND OUR RANGE OF CONTACTS HAS BROADENED, WE HAVE DEVELOPED THE CAPACITY TO PUT MOST FIRMS DIRECTLY IN TOUCH WITH POTENTIAL BUYERS OF THEIR PRODUCTS.

4. EVEN WHEN NOMINALLY ORGANIZED UNDER A SINGLE PRODUCT-THEME, TRADE MISSIONS DIVIDE THE TIME OF OUR ECONOMIC/COMMERICAL SECTION IN A WAY THAT OFTEN DOES NOT SERVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 WARSAW 02182 081809Z

MEMBER FIRMS. UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, WE CAN BE FAR MORE HELPFUL TO U.S. COMPANIES WHICH APPROACH US INDIVIDUALLY FOR ASSISTANCE THAN WE CAN TO A COLLECTION OF FIRMS GROUPED AS A TRADE MISSION. DAVIES

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